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CHILE: More talk of showdown as violence spreads.
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CHILE: The spread of extremist-led violence is again raising talk of a showdown between the Allende government and its opponents.

The efforts by radicals of right and left to provoke clashes have been increasingly successful as Chileans of all classes react to food shortages, high prices, media exhortations, and the frustrations of a bad winter. All are quick to blame political opponents for the problems, with the Allende administration's inept economic performance getting the most acrimonious attacks.

Some businessmen, encouraged by the widespread effect of a recent shopowners' strike, are reportedly joining with the ultrarightist Fatherland and Freedom group to try to raise tensions to the point of provoking a coup by worried military officers.

[redacted] they hope to stir up demonstrations on a variety of issues in the expectation that leftist extremists will retaliate. Like their counterparts, the far rightists reject political solutions. Moreover, they claim to have military contacts who agree [redacted]

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The Communists, who in the past have seen a military coup as the most serious threat to the government, appear less concerned than usual by the new rumors of plotting. One [redacted] Communist thinks that, although party leaders are nervous over their personal safety, even a violent confrontation would not lead to a military coup. The Communists may believe that the bulk of the armed forces consider the defense of public security and of the constitutional government against all extremists to be their prime responsibility, overriding consideration of a coup attempt. [redacted]

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